

# **Milford Board of Education**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Regular Business Meeting**

#### **July 13, 2009**

#### **Board members present:**

David Amendola  
Tracy Casey  
David Hourigan, Board Chair  
Jim Quish  
Joanne Rohrig, Minority Leader  
Jim Santa Barbara  
Pamela Staneski  
Greta Stanford, Majority Leader  
David Steinlauf

#### **Administrators present:**

Harvey Polansky, Superintendent  
Philip Russell, Deputy Superintendent  
Wendy Kopazna, Dir. of Human Resources  
Susan Kelleher, Dir. of Pupil Personnel Services  
Carol Malone, Supervisor of Curriculum/Reading

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Milford Board of Education held its regular business meeting on Monday, July 13, 2009, in the Board of Education Meeting Room in the Parsons Complex. Board Chair David Hourigan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

### **II. STUDENT/STAFF RECOGNITION**

Dr. Harvey Polansky and Board Chair David Hourigan started the meeting with recognition of the Kindergarten Transition Team.

#### **Kindergarten Transition Team**

Kids Count of Milford participated in a program titled "Kindergarten Transition Institute" funded by the William Caspar Graustein Memorial fund. Milford had representatives from Kids Count, the Milford Family Resource Center, the Milford Public Schools and the United Way of Milford.

The group gathered data regarding the overall process of transition to kindergarten from preschools and child care centers, the procedures that the Milford Public Schools utilize and surveys from parents and kindergarten teachers. The group developed the "Welcome to Kindergarten" DVD that is now in distribution throughout the Milford preschools, the Milford Public Library, and the Milford elementary schools. Recognized were:

Kathy Aspinwall	Peggy Bruno
Susan Dawid	Andrea Giannattasio
Gary Johnson	Susan Pavelko
Peggy Kelly	Christine Kennedy

### **III. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

- Greta Stanford made a motion to accept the June 8, 2009 meeting minutes as approved. Joanne Rohrig seconded. With the noted changes, the motion passed unanimously.
- Greta Stanford made a motion to accept the June 15, 2009 meeting minutes as approved. Joanne Rohrig seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Greta Stanford made a motion to accept the June 19, 2009 meeting minutes as approved. Joanne Rohrig seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Howard Stein of 391 Herbert Street – Mr. Stein has two children who attend Law. He was formerly a volunteer coach. The district has since eliminated the option for a student's parents to coach the sport that a student is playing. He further stated that two coaches have also left this year and now the board has voted to eliminate an assistant coaching position at both Law and Foran. This has created a potential safety hazard to students. The student to adult ratio has changed significantly, jeopardizing the supervision while on a field trip or just playing the game. He said it is impossible to get a "non" parent volunteer to commit their time. There are parents out there who are willing to volunteer their time to help support the program. He asked the board to reconsider the decision of eliminating the assistant coaches.

Mr. Rich Schumitz of 20 Snug Harbor Road– He feels it is impossible to have one coach supervise 100 kids and it creates a safety concern. Football is a big winner to the district. Money brought into football brings in a lot of money for the other sports. He also asked the board why the teachers were given a 5% increase in pay when others are not even getting raises. That money could have been used to fund the assistant coach position.

Mr. Barry Bonessi of 157 Gulf Street – Mr. Bonessi echoed the last two speakers, except for the comment about the raises. Between Law and Foran, there are 100+ kids playing football. Football needs supervision. The kids need to be taught skills and safety. You cannot do it with cutting coaches. He asked the board to reinstate the positions. He also asked why the board chose to cut the \$3,000 for the hockey program. Students who participate in the program already pay \$900 per kid. To his knowledge, the hockey program is the only pay for play program in Milford. He also requested the board put the \$3,000 back into the hockey program.

Bob Gemignani of 39 Lance Lane – His son attends Foran and plays hockey for the Milford Indians. He said that there was no mention of cutting the hockey budget by \$3,000 until this meeting. The program is the only pay for play program in Milford, not to mention the program has maxed out fundraising for the costs of equipment. Every dollar is accounted for. Assistant coaches do not get paid. Parents have volunteered for years and will continue to donate their time. A cut of \$3,000 will hurt the program and the participants. He requested the board reinstate the \$3,000.

Kathy Bonetti 157 Seaside Avenue – Mrs. Bonetti is a parent and the president of the PTA at West Shore Middle School. She read a prepared statement (on file) that represented her displeasure in the \$3,600 cut to the middle school graduations. She explained how the \$1,200 allocation for each school was used. She also told the board that middle school graduations have been conducted in Milford for more than 50 years.

Cathy Berni 96 Centennial Drive – Mrs. Berni shared her displeasure with the coaches and others about their lack of attendance at the budget meetings. She told everyone that the time to fight for funding dollars was then, not now. The budget has already been done. Everyone should share their views and comments during the budget meetings.

Doug Daniels of 56 Eisenhower Drive – Mr. Daniels asked the board to get creative with the available resources. He said the board is going to cut paid positions and volunteer coaches are not allowed. The board should rethink the volunteerism of coaches.

Dr. Polansky told him that the board implores volunteers. However, it does not condone the practice of solely volunteering because your child is on the team.

#### **V. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Board Chair David Hourigan called for the Liaison Reports. There were none.

#### **VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

##### **1. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Polansky deferred his report.

##### **2. Instructional Report**

###### Expulsion Report

Dr. Polansky explained the annual expulsion report provided to the board is statutory. It contains the number of students expelled, for what circumstance, and the disposition of the expulsion.

He then explained that the suspension law has changed slightly by only allowing a student to be suspended for 10 days at a time. An expulsion is for 365 days. However, administration can grant a student to return on a probation pending successful completion of an evaluation and program. If the student follows school rules and displays proper behavior, the student's record could be expunged.

### **Assessment Calendar**

Dr. Polansky told the board over the last two years, \$100,000 has been cut from the budget due to some processes or assessments getting the same results. Administration continues to refine the process. He then asked Mrs. Malone to go over the calendar.

Mrs. Malone then shared the annual assessment calendar with the board. The assessments will occur during the year in grades 2-12. All assessment testing has a specific purpose from problem solving, writing, literacy, reading and math. The assessment tests will assist in the identification of where the students are falling within the State's expectation. It also helps to identify struggling learners. The district will provide remediation programs for the students who are not at the level they should be.

Mr. Hourigan asked if the CAPT test is a graduation requirement. Mrs. Malone said that if a student does not pass the CAPT test, he/she would then have the opportunity to take math and writing assessments and they would be considered acceptable.

## **1. Operational Report**

### **a) Personnel Report**

Mrs. W. Kopazna, Director of Human Resources, presented the report for June. She reported the district has hired 20 new teachers to date. Openings remain for Spanish teachers and a technology teacher. She also said that due to 3 more retirements, 5 teachers who did not have jobs at the end of June have been placed.

Nine teachers will not be returning due to lower enrollment and middle school restructuring. However, the teachers will be recalled if positions within their certification area become available.

### **b) Budget Report for May**

Mr. Russell presented the Budget Performance Report for June and the Cash Disbursements Report. 100% of the budget has been spent.

Mr. Russell responded to an earlier question that arose about an item on the voucher disbursement list regarding the cost of the architectural drawings at East Shore. He said the board approved the Education Specifications and then it was assigned to the building committee. Administration believed the \$50,000 would be reimbursed by a State grant when the work was done.

Mr. Santa Barbara believes the East Shore project should be a priority.

Mrs. Staneski asked if the district is receiving financial assistance from the State for the VoAg program. She was told no.

A discussion ensued about the athletic costs and the cash disbursements report. Dr. Polansky told the board that an extensive audit was done last year. It is clear the athletic program does not self fund itself. Mr. Russell told him that there is no way to control the revenue. However, the expenditures can be controlled.

Mr. Amendola said the board thought they knew what they were willing to spend until the budget was cut by the Board of Aldermen. He also said that it was terrible that when the unions were asked for concessions, no one was willing to waive an increase except for the superintendent. He also noted that he really wished that people came out and spoke during budget time.

Mrs. Rohrig asked for clarification of the 88 leather jackets for Law. She asked administration to research the expense and report it to the board. She also said she has concerns about "school equity."

Dr. Polansky suggested that the athletic directors and the community, with the input from CAIC, should participate in the forum to discuss the athletics program.

Dr. Polansky told the board there is definitely a budget gap in the athletics budget. He further said that there was an extensive audit done last year and the athletic directors were present at the October Committee of the Whole meeting when the audit was released to the board.

In the end, Mr. Hourigan asked for a very detailed breakdown of the athletics at the October Committee of the Whole meeting.

Mr. Santa Barbara asked administration for a report of how many teachers are currently working on carts versus in classrooms at East Shore.

**c) Budget Transfers**

Mr. Russell told the board that, in March, a memo was sent to the board requesting to transfer any unused funds to the building projects account. Asbestos abatement, emergency pool repair, time and attendance system, and equipment and computers are some of the things that the transfer would cover.

## **VII. CONSENT AGENDA**

Greta Stanford made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda item b., as presented. This will move Item a. Voucher List and Item c. Budget Transfers to New Business. Joanne Rohrig seconded. The Consent agenda included:

- Field Trip – Joseph A. Foran High School Football Team trip to the Northfield Mt. Herman School in Northfield, MA from 8/27-30/09

Motion passed unanimously.

## **VIII. ACTION ITEMS**

**Unfinished Business.** None.

**New Business.** Greta Stanford made a motion to approve the new business items “voucher list” and “budget transfers” that were moved from the Consent Agenda list, as presented. Mrs. Rohrig seconded.

Mr. Santa Barbara asked Mr. Russell for a description of the 1111 unpaid leave money. Mrs. Kopazna told him that an employee could be on unpaid leave and backfilled by an employee at a lower salary rate. Also, there are some employees that resign and the district will then hire a new college graduate.

Mrs. Staneski asked if the district would be receiving any grants for the energy conservation and was told no.

Motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Rohrig made a motion to add a discussion to reinstate the assistant coaches of football to the agenda. Mr. Quish seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Rohrig told the board that after listening to the public, this has made her understand the seriousness of the safety of the football players. She would like to the board to direct administration to find the funds to reinstate the two assistant coaches.

Dr. Polansky said the funds would need to come from the athletics account. Equipment needs could be put on hold. Supplies could be put on hold. Dr. Polansky said the board would need to approve the transfer.

Mrs. Staneski said she was under the understanding that the board does not need approve administration changing from account. Dr. Polansky told her that unfortunately there are object functions and funds would need to be transferred from the 8200 series to the 1114.

Mrs. Rohrig made a motion to reinstate two assistant football coaches, one at Law and one at Foran. Mr. Santa Barbara seconded.

Mrs. Casey told the board that they are again acting in a reactive manner. Given there were a variety of other items raised during public comment, she felt that if one item would be considered, they all needed to be considered. The budget season has been very reactive. However, with the discussion at the Board Retreat, she feels that the process outlined for next year would not result in the same problems we're experiencing this year.

Mrs. Rohrig said she is not being reactive. She has received many calls from parents and statistics were provided by administration.

Mr. Santa Barbara said that the board has made decisions and the public reacted. He believes the board should move forward.

Mr. Steinlauf said the board has heard comments of reinstating assistant coaches, reinstating the \$3,000 hockey program cut and volunteers. Perhaps maybe the board will need to get creative. The board does allow volunteers but not parents of participants. Maybe the board should contact universities to seek existing coaches who may be interested in volunteering.

Mrs. Staneski said that there are many clubs that do all of their work without paid coaches. Is it that you won't get a good person if you do not pay them? The entire budget will be opened up to discussion because we could question many items. She also stated that when the board voted to eliminate the two assistant coaches, the safety piece should have already been considered by administration.

Dr. Polansky said the recommendation to eliminate the positions did not come from him; it came from the board

Mrs. Rohrig said she is not asking administration to find dollars. She want the funds to be reallocated to reinstate them.

Mr. Amendola said if we reallocate dollars, then the hockey program needs to be considered.

Mrs. Rohrig told the board the hockey dollars were cut in January. The board cut the assistant football coaches at the last meeting.

Mr. Hourigan said the board spent countless hours as a board going over the budget. The board should not make a decision to reinstate any dollars until the board has time to think about it. He then said his recommendation would be to table the motion until the August meeting.

Mrs. Casey asked Dr. Polansky to give the board administration's recommendation of the budget at the August meeting.

Mrs. Staneski asked for clarification of the tabled motion.

Mrs. Staneski said she believes that any item in the budget should be opened for discussion.

Mr. Quish said that if something gets added to the agenda, the board should be able to discuss it and take action if needed.

Mr. Amendola made a motion to table the motion until the August board meeting. Mr. Quish seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## **IX. BOARD COMMENT**

None.

## **X. ADJOURN**

Greta Stanford made a motion to adjourn. Joanne Rohrig seconded. Motion passed unanimously.  
Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.